

CPYRGHT

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INTERNATIONAL  
UPI-185  
(DONOVAN)

JUNE 11, 1963

WASHINGTON--ALL 13 REPUBLICAN MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TODAY CALLED FOR A CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY NEW YORK ATTORNEY JAMES DONOVAN IN THE RECENT RELEASE OF PRISONERS FROM COMMUNIST CUBA.

THE REQUEST WAS MADE IN A LETTER TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN THOMAS E. MORGAN, D-PA.

THE TOP-RANKING REPUBLICAN ON THE HOUSE GROUP, REP. FRANCES P. BOLTON OF OHIO EMPHASIZED TO NEWSMEN THAT THERE WAS "NOTHING POLITICAL" BEHIND THE MOVE.

DONOVAN NEGOTIATED THE RELEASE OF 1,113 CUBAN PRISONERS FROM THE ILL-FATED BAY OF PIGS INVASION IN EXCHANGE FOR A RANSOM PAYMENT OF CASH, FOOD, AND MEDICINES. HE ALSO NEGOTIATED THE EXCHANGE OF 27 AMERICANS HELD IN CUBAN PRISONS FOR THREE CUBAN CRIMINALS IMPRISONED IN THIS COUNTRY. THE FIRST EXCHANGE WAS IN DECEMBER OF LAST YEAR. THE SECOND TOOK PLACE IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR.

6/11--N522PED

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THE REPUBLICANS SAID IN THEIR JOINT LETTER THAT MANY ASPECTS OF DONOVAN'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH CUBAN PREMIER FIDEL CASTRO "REMAIN BAFFLING."

THEY RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER HE WAS SERVING AS AN AGENT OF THE U. S. GOVERNMENT OR ACTING AS A PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL IN POSSIBLE VIOLATION OF THE LOGAN ACT, WHICH PROHIBITS PRIVATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO INFLUENCE THEIR ACTIONS.

THE GOP MEMBERS SAID "A MORE BASIC QUESTION THAT DESERVES SERIOUS CONSIDERATION IS THE WISDOM OF PERMITTING THOSE IN THE AMBIGUOUS POSITION OF MR. DONOVAN TO CARRY ON NEGOTIATIONS WHICH APPEAR TO ENTAIL WEIGHTY OBLIGATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

"THIS QUESTION BECOMES EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT WHEN A PRIVATE CITIZEN, ANSWERABLE AS SUCH TO NO GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY, IS PERMITTED TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE HEAD OF THE COMMUNIST CUBAN GOVERNMENT WITH WHICH RECOGNITION HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN AND WHICH IS OSTENSIBLY BEING OPPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES."

THE REPUBLICANS SAID ALSO THAT DONOVAN SHOULD BE SUMMONED TO TESTIFY "TO DETERMINE THE EXACT NATURE AND SCOPE OF HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH CASTRO."

THE JOINT LETTER SAID DONOVAN COMMENTED IN A RECENT SPEECH THAT HIS CONTACTS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH CASTRO CAN LEAD "TO CONSEQUENCES WE CANNOT ENVISION NOW."

"THIS STATEMENT," THE REPUBLICANS SAID, "CONTAINS IMPLICATIONS THAT MR. DONOVAN'S MISSION MAY NOT HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS BUT INSTEAD MAY BE A CONTINUING ONE DEALING WITH BROADER ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONS WITH CUBA. IF THIS IS TO BE THE CASE, THE CONGRESS SHOULD BE SO INFORMED."

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THE GOP MEMBERS SAID THE BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT DONOVAN DONATED HIS SERVICES AND SKILLS TO A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION, THE CUBAN FAMILIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE. THE REPUBLICANS SAID OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE, THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND JUSTICE DEPARTMENT DECLARED THAT DONOVAN'S UNDER-TAKING WAS A PRIVATE ONE, WITH NO "OVERT ASSISTANCE" FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

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UPI-194

"YET," THE REPUBLICAN SAID, "THE NEW YORK WORLD TELEGRAM AND SUN REPORTED ON OCT. 10, 1962 THAT DONOVAN WAS ACTING AS AN 'AGENT' OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD GIVEN HIM THE ASSIGNMENT BECAUSE THE WHITE HOUSE FELT IT HAD A 'MORAL OBLIGATION' TO OBTAIN THE RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS."

THE GOP LETTER SAID IT ALSO HAD BEEN REPORTED IN THE PRESS THAT ATTY. GEN. ROBERT KENNEDY PERSONALLY DIRECTED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT IN BEHALF OF THE DONOVAN GROUP AND MADE PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS TO MANY DRUG MANUFACTURERS REQUESTING DONATIONS OF FOOD AND DRUGS FOR THE EXCHANGE. PRESS ACCOUNTS SAID OTHER JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AIDES ALSO ASSISTED IN THE EFFORT, THE REPUBLICANS SAID.

"APPARENTLY," THE GOP LETTER SAID, "THESE GOVERNMENT LAWYERS ALSO OBTAINED FOR DONOVAN A PERFORMANCE BOND AND A \$53 MILLION LETTER OF CREDIT, GUARANTEEING CASH TO CASTRO IF THE CUBAN FAMILIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE AMERICAN RED CROSS WERE UNABLE TO MEET THE FULL COMMITMENT OF PLEDGES."

THEY SAID THE FACTS IN THE MATTER "GIVE RISE TO SERIOUS QUESTIONS OF LAW AND PUBLIC POLICY."

6/11--N550PED

UPI-224

THE WHITE HOUSE HAD NO IMMEDIATE COMMENT ON THE GOP CALL FOR AN INVESTIGATION.

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